

New Final Rule

U.S. Department of State

Exchange Visitor Program - Teachers



The law governing the U.S. State Department's Exchange Visitor Teacher Program, of which all of you are a part, is changing beginning on the 29th of February, 2016.

Much about the program will remain the same.

There are certain important changes that you need to be made aware of concerning teachers who are currently working in Indiana under the authority of J-1 visa sponsored by CIESC and those coming next year. Here is a summary of the changes and a brief explanation of each:

4th and 5th Year Extensions

- Up until now, visiting teachers have been limited to a maximum period of service of 3 years; extensions of service have been impossible to secure.
- Now, the State Department is making it much easier for host schools and districts to apply to have their visiting teachers stay for a fourth and even a fifth year. Extension requests will be approved by the U.S. Department of State on a case-by-case basis based on the proven need for the teachers' continuing service and also the teachers' performance during the first three years of the exchange.
- The visa sponsor must support the extension and agree to submit the district's extension request. CIESC is not planning to extend for a year any requests beyond the 3rd year at this time.

New Cross-Cultural Activities Requirement

- The Exchange Visitor Teacher Program is first and foremost a cross-cultural exchange program. In the past, participants and hosts have been required to work together to ensure an enriching cross-cultural experience for all involved in the program. Visiting educators have been encouraged - but not required - to share elements of their home culture with their students and communities to raise the awareness and understanding of Americans about their countries and cultures.
- Now, the new rule requires every exchange visitor teacher to complete mandatory, annual cross-cultural activities. First, exchange teachers will be required to organize at least one activity in a public setting to share aspects of their cultural heritage with their U.S. students and community members.
- Additionally, guest teachers will be required to facilitate an ongoing dialogue through virtual exchange between their U.S. students and students in another country, preferably the exchange teacher's home country.
- The host school and the exchange teacher should work together at the beginning of the academic year to develop an annual plan of creative cross-cultural activity components to be completed within the exchange teacher's own classroom.

Submission of an Annual Report

- Up until now, exchange visitor teachers have not been required by the U.S. Department of State to formally report on their experiences or activities.
- Now beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, all exchange visitor teachers will be required to write up and submit an annual report to their J-1 visa sponsor (ODE) detailing their annual cross-cultural activities.
- Required report elements will include the teachers name, sponsor's name, host institution's name, the dates of the cross-cultural activities, locations where the activities took place, number of participants or individuals in attendance, topics of the presentations or exchanges, a general overview of each activity and information about their overall impact on the larger community where the exchange teacher is living and working.

No More Waivers of the 2-Year Homestay Rule

- In the past, many exchange visitor teachers applied for a waiver of the 2-year Homestay Rule, which requires J-1 visa holders to live outside of the United States for two years prior to becoming eligible to receive another J-1 visa. Securing a waiver permitted exchange teachers to return immediately to the U.S. with another J-1 visa to continue working in another place.
- Beginning on February 29, 2016, all J-1 teachers who have completed their service (which may include 4th and 5th year extensions) must leave the United States for a minimum period of 2 years before becoming eligible again for another J-1 visa. No more waivers will be given, and no one will be able to work again as an exchange teacher after their first J-1 visa expires until they have resided outside of the United States for at least two years.